

THE QUEEN OF SNOWS

In the Taj Mahal and Annexe
Hotels of
Bombay how the pulses of life beat
quicker
than elsewhere where each mail
steamer often
brings twenty brides to step from
these hos-
pitable portals into the boat of life.
In the
big hotels of Simla every one is filled
with a
deadly terror of a false move, or an
undesirable
acquaintance, who may snatch
away the
coveted prize they have climbed the
Hill
Difficulty to get, and turn it into a
coup
manque. This gives the habitues
of the
summer capital the " Simla face/"
which one
can generally spot from its stony
stare, its
features carefully trained into a mask
lest any
should discern the real man or
woman inside
the puppet of iron-bound convention.
But to
Mussoorie come those insouciant
souls who
want nothing but to enjoy, and so the
Charle-
ville may be called the palace of
pleasure *par*
excellence of the Orient. In no other
hotel is
gaiety so much the business of life as
here,
pursued " tooth and nail," as a
Scotch *padre*
put it. Yet what bits of real life have
been

revealed to me there from the
unsealed lips of
men and women, in low tones sunk
below the
waltzes of the string band at dinner,
in quiet
corners between the giant pots of
fuchsias,